QUESTION FORMATION IN ENGLISH AND NIGERIAN PIDGIN [NP]

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Abstract

This work analysis of, question formation in English and Nigerian Pidgin was carried out to examine similarities and differences between formation of question in English and Nigerian Pidgin. The study derives its framework from Government Binding Theory, a theory that elaborates syntactic levels through the concept of movement. This research is a qualitative one, recordings, personal contacts and observational data were collected and analysed. The findings indicate that there is movement of elements in both languages though with significant difference.

Keywords: English language; Nigerian Pidgin; Pidgin

Background to the Study

Language is the institution whereby human communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols- Hall (1968). English was officially introduced in Nigeria by the British colonial administration. It was used mainly as the language of administration and by the missionaries in educating parts of the population as 0pine by Adetugbo [1979] and Bamgbose (1991). At the end of the colonial era, Nigeria retained English as its official language in line with Nigeria's extreme linguistic diversity, Elugbe (1974).

Pidgin is a language which develops as a contact language when groups of people who speak different languages try to communicate with one another on a regular basis. This has occurred many times in the past when foreign traders had to communicate with the local population or groups of workers from different language backgrounds on plantations or in factories.

It has thus often been called contact, trade or auxiliary language, Omamor (1991). Pidgin has been defined differently by several scholars and linguists based on the direction of their research. According to Holm (1980), it is a reduced language used by groups with no language in common who need to communicate for trade or other purposes. Also, it can be seen as a language that arises to fulfil certain restricted communication needs among people who have no common language, Todd, (1974). Pidgin from these two scholars is a language that has been used to communicate between groups of people that lack common language.

Again, Ojaide and Ashuntantang (2020) are of opinion that it is a language that emerges due to contact between people of different languages, which is usually a combination of different languages. This shows that though it is limited lexically and structurally but suitable for specialized communication. It has some unique features such as uncomplicated grammatical structure, reduction of syllabus codes, reduction of consonants clusters, no tones as found in West African languages, separate words to indicate terms usually preceding the verb, reduplication to represent plurals. Some other scholars as Willson et al (2013); Decamp (1971); Hymes [1974] and Hudson (1990) in Idiagbon (1999) gave a summary characteristics of pidgin as, elimination of grammatical device such as inflections, plural possessives and tenses, the use

of reduplication as intensifiers, ability of a word to have semantic extension - expanded meaning.

Nigerian pidgin (NP) is an English-based contact language that developed as a result of European contact with West Africa languages. It is accorded a low prestige in Nigeria because it is not officially recognized and was mostly used by speakers / people who could not acquire formal education. Over the years, Nigerian pidgin has gradually gained in importance because educated Nigerians are now using it to communicate. According to research, Nigerian pidgin is now the language with the highest population of users, and also a first language in some minority groups, Igboanusi (2008). The most striking change in status is its prominent use in our tertiary institutions. Given the status, use and longtime co-existence of these languages, contact induced mutual influence and change is to be expected. Nigerian pidgin has basically been a spoken language in Nigeria and it would appear to have been managed in order to sustain a vital oral literature and used as a vehicle for language, song, folktales and proverbs.

Conceptual Framework
Nigeria has diverse languages of which three are regarded as major languages – Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba without mutual intelligibility among them. According to a recent research estimate there are about (500) five hundred languages in Nigeria, Adetugbite, (2020). It was difficult to pick one of them to be or serve as a national language as it might have given rise to national animosity towards the chosen language. To avoid such national problem, English was retained as the official language because it was considered a neutral language that belongs to no ethnic group. This has helped to foster peace and unity in diversity.

Nigerian pidgin is a variety of the West African Creole, which has been traced to the 15th century along the coastal regions of Sapele, Warri, Calabar, Portharcourt and Badagry among others. The upsurge of interest in slave trade brought about the earliest contact between the Europeans and Africans and where there was no common medium of communication, the emergence of a pidgin language became apparent Nair (1972). The first recorded Nigerian pidgin form of document was by the famous Antera Duke, a prominent chief and trader in old Calabar, who wrote mostly about the activities that transpired between the Efik and white trading partners and supercargoes along the Cross River Basin up to Bakasi in southern Cameroon, Mensah (2011). It is noted that the earliest contact of West African people with the Europeans was with the Portuguese in the 15th century. This explains the presence of a pocket of Portuguese word in the lexicon of Nigerian pidgin such as pikin-child; palaver-problem; dash-gift; sabi- knows etc. Venamali (1993).

Nigerian pidgin started off as a language of business communication and with the passage of time, it expanded to other domains and functionalities. Nigerian pidgin has English as the lexifier language, while other languages like native languages are the substrate source of lexicon influence. Nigerian pidgin as an English – based contact language, like most pidgins, Nigerian pidgin has a superstrate – English and many substrate languages- indigenous languages. Most of the vocabulary of Nigerian pidgin is from English, with additional contributions to the words stock from the local languages and also Portuguese. Nigerian pidgin is the language with the highest number of speakers in Nigeria, Jibril (1995); Faraclas (2008). Jowitt, (2019) suggests, that the idea that half of the Nigerian population is fluent in Nigerian pidgin, as asserted by Faraclas (2008), should be treated with caution. Jowitt's reason being that Nigerian pidgin is not used in the north at the same level it is used in other parts of the country, given that Hausa is a major lingua franca in the north and serve the same purpose that

Nigerian pidgin serves in the south, A good number of people in the north or northerners might not be fluent speakers of Nigerian pidgin, but a greater number of them are speakers of Nigerian pidgin. Nigerian pidgin is the, only pidgin spoken in Nigeria. It is a member of West African Pidgin English (W.A.E.P.). West African Pidgin English has three varieties: Nigerian Pidgin (N.p); Ghanaian pidgin (G.P) and Cameroonian pidgin (C.P.). ELugbe (1995) notes that these three varieties are W.A .P.E. Sierra Leonian Krio and Liberian Kru, Finney, (2003). West African Pidgins are members of the Atlantic group of English- based pidgin and creoles. Nigerian pidgin and English are the ethnically neutral languages in Nigeria. It has a national spread especially in military and paramilitary formation in the country, Scaliner[2011] underscores the importance of the two languages in Nigeria's linguistic ecology thus;

> Certainly, English and pidgin are mostly second languages, acquired in addition to tribal and regional languages. Both have been found to increasingly become mother tongues of African children as well; however, English is becoming a First language primarily in educated families and in urban context and pidgin in certain regions and amongst the less affluent. Strictly, pidgin is thus a creolising language.

Nigerian pidgin is inferior to English because it is used mainly for informal communication and it lacks a standard orthography. Unlike English, it is not the language of upward socio-economic mobility. This is why derogatory names like broken English and bad English are ascribed to the language, Holm [1988]. In fact, the use of the language is discouraged in primary and secondary schools in the Niger Delta where it has been creolized and in Nigeria in general. Due to the close affinity between Nigerian pidgin and the indigenous languages in terms of structure and function, Nigerian pidgin can be apathy described as a neo-Nigerian language.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The theoretical framework used in this study is Government binding theory (GB). This is the theory of language developed by Chomsky which based on the concept of a universal Grammar. It can be seen as a network of different sub-theories which consist of certain principles and conditions. This theory explains universal Grammar as introduced by Chomsky (1989).

Cook (1988) in his opinion says Government Binding theory elaborate syntactic levels through the concept of movement. It is also a theory that is concerned with how far a constituent can move within a sentence. Its main principle is the subjacency condition which forbids movement across more than one bounding node.

The data for this study was collected through contact method, which is a personal contact with people speaking Nigerian pidgin in Asaba, Delta state of Nigeria.The methodology adopted for data collection is the qualitative method and the orthography adopted for NP is the phonetically based linguistics type.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The collected data are transcribed and worked upon in accordance with the speakers' use of Nigerian pidgin in their day-to-day activities without imposing any foreign rules or norms of correctness as found in English language. The Morpheme that makes up the phrase and

sentences are also carefully polished through framework which allows for considerable account of information by manipulating linguistic element within the framework.

Indicatively, formation of question is a Transformational process that deals with how questions are formed correctly and also a phrase that demands for information. There are four major types question formation in English, thus:
< Special question.
< General question
< Choice question
< Disjunctive / Tag question.

Wh-Questions
These questions whether restricted or non-restricted are questions usually posed by the questioner for specific facts and information. They are questions that are introduced by WH-words as: where; what; when; why; which; and how. They are questions that contain interrogative pro-form which is also known as content question- word question and information question as posited Crystal, (1981:294-383). Examples:
1. ENGLISH: What about your father?
    NP: Una papa nko?
2. ENGLISH: Why did you yourself do a thing like that?
    NP: Wai u sef du dat kain tin?
3. ENGLISH: What if I see the motor?
    NP: If I si di moto nko?
4. ENGLISH: What about the girl?
    NP: Di girl nko?
5. ENGLISH: What is he doing?
    NP: Weti im de du?
6. ENGLISH: Who is there?
    NP: Na hu de dia?
7. ENGLISH: Where has your brother gone to?
    NP: Na wia una broda kom go?
8. ENGLISH: How many?
    NP: hau meni?
9. ENGLISH: How much?
    NP: hau moch?
10. ENGLISH: Why now?
    NP: Wai naa?
    The item 'nko' is used in place of 'what about' and / or 'what if' in English language in question formation. The existence of an item 'nko'in NP which is used for question related to just a noun as shown above.
SPECIAL QUESTIONS: This uses a certain word at the beginning of the sentence to ask special question. It is also called Wh- question. It has two movements. Examples:
1. ENGLISH: How did he narrate the story to you?
    NP: Na hau im tel u di tori?
2. ENGLISH: How did you manage to kill the bird?
    NP: hau u tek kil di bed?
3. ENGLISH: Where did you buy the book?
    NP: Wie u bai di buk?
4. ENGLISH: Where is the phone?

       NP: Wie di fon de?
5. ENGLISH: Where are we going?
    NP: Wie wi de go?
6. ENGLISH: Where is John?
    NP: Wie jon de?
7. ENGLISH: You came when?
    NP: Wen u kom?
8. ENGLISH: Which place are we going?
    NP: Wich pleci wi go go?
9. ENGLISH: Which person travel?
    NP: Na hu travu?
10. ENGLISH: Who slap her?
    NP: Na hu slap am?
11. ENGLISH: Why did they eat your food?
    NP: Wai de kom chop ya fud?
12. ENGLISH: Why are you running?
    NP: Wai u kom de ron?

There is application of the movement rule-movement of question constituent from original position to another position.
Also application of AUX-NP invasion rule as in no (7) above.

General or Polar Question
These are questions that are drawn from declarative statement through Aux-NP invasion rule. It can be driven with yes/ No by marking the NP in a declarative sentence swap position with the INFL element. It can also be a common question that can be answered with a simple yes or No in otherwise known as Yes or No question. Example:
1. ENGLISH: Do you like the food?
    NP: Shee u lyk di fud?
2. ENGLISH: Did goat eat my food?
    NP: Shee got chop mai fud?
3. ENGLISH: Can I call my mother?
    NP: Abi mek I kul mai moda?
4. ENGLISH: Are you hungry?
    NP: U de hongri?

In this type of question the appropriate rising intonation should be used at the end of the sentence.
Again, Yes-No questions are usually formed by placing the operators before the subject and giving the sentence a rising intonation in English and Nigerian Pidgin, thus;
ENGLISH: Has the boat left?
NP: Haz d bot lef?
ENGLISH: Is your phone on?
NP: Abi your fon oon?

Tag or Disjunctive Question
This is the same with both languages under study in that if the question is positive the answer will be negative. Example:
ENGLISH: John could be your friend, couldn't he?

NP: Jon kud bi yo frnd, abii?
ENGLISH: You have called my name, haven't you?
NP: U don kol mai nem, abii?
ENGLISH: It is my phone, isn't it?
NP: Ibi mai phone, abii?
ENGLISH: They will go market, won't they?
NP: Dem go go market, abii?

Tag question is always inviting in confirmation of a statement which has the force of an exclamation rather than genuine question as Crystal (1987) observes. Example:

ENGLISH: Will you come?
NP: Abii, u go kom?

Also Tag question consists of operator plus pronoun with or without a negative particle; the choice and tense of the operator are determined by the verb phrase in the superordinate clause thus:

ENGLISH: The boat hasn't come, has it?
NP: D bot don kom, abi?
ENGLISH: Hasn't the boat come already?
NP: Abii d bot don kom?

In the above, if the superordinate clause is positive, the tag is negative and vise-versa. The nuclear tone of tag always occurs on the operator and is either a rise or fall in both English and Nigerian Pidgin. Example, Isn't it the case that you people went?
Shebi una bin go fo d kesi?

Alternate Question
There are two types of alternate questions, the first resembles a Yes-No question while the second resembles a W-question.Examples:

   ENGLISH: Would you like malt or coke?
   NP: Abi u laik mot or kok?
   ENGLISH: Which ice-cream would you like? Chocolate or vanilla?
   NP: Wich aic – krim wud u laik? Chokolet or vanilla?

In the above the difference in Yes-No question is in intonation; there is no movement of element. Again in rhetorical questions usually have the normal rising tone/intonation of a yes-no question in both NP and English, thus;
ENGLISH: Who knows?
NP: Hu no?

Declarative Question
These are questions that are loaded with the questioner's views, aiming at indicting the respondent. Gibbons (2008) asserts that they are very powerful questions because they contain the proposition of the questioner (115-130). As can be inferred from above assertion, declarative questions have presuppositions and all questions posed in natural language will contain words that have emotive connotations. According to Wattson (2003)'the suggestiveness of a declarative question can have subtle effects on the respondent.
The declarative is an exceptional type of yes-no question intonation thus;
   1. ENGLISH: Did you realize what you did?
      NP: U don reliz weti u du?
   2. ENGLISH: Will you come?

NP: U go kom?
3. ENGLISH: Are you crying?
   NP: U de krai?
4. ENGLISH: Did I be come?
   NP: Sebi Ibe kom?
5. ENGLISH: Can I follow this place?
   NP: I fit folo dis pleci?

There is also a movement of elements in the above sentence.

Choice Question
These are also known as polar questions. They are those questions that require the respondent to oscillate between two options of Yes or No. Konig and Samuel, (2007:271) assert that, ' polar interrogatives are typically used to inquire about the truth and falsity of the propositions they express'. They further note that different strategies are adopted by languages in forming polar questions. They mentioned six methods that have been established typologically in forming polar interrogative as thus:
- The use of interrogative particles.
- A change in relative word order.
- The use of special tags.
- The addition of special intonation patterns.
- The use of disjunctive – negative structure.
- The use of particular verbal inclusion.
   Examples:
   1. ENGLISH: Do you like the food?
      NP: U lik de fud?
   2. ENGLISH: Did dog eat my food?
      NP: Shebi dog chop mi fud?
   3. ENGLISH: Can I call my father?
      NP: Abi mek I kul mai papa?
   4. ENGLISH: Are you hungry?
      NP: Shebi u hongri?

Negative Orientation
This is a form of question found in questions which contain a negative form of one kind or another thus;
ENGLISH: Isn't your car working?
NP: Abi ur ka not woki?
In the above there is a movement of element while intonation that is, rising intonation remains same in both English and Nigerian Pidgin.
There is a surface similarity between English and Nigerian Pidgin but English operates a clearly different system from the Nigerian Pidgin, thus;

ENGLISH: What is he doing?
NP: Wetin I de du? Or Wetin (he) de du?
ENGLISH: Who is there?
NP: Na hu de die?
ENGLISH: How is your mother?
NP: Una mama nko?

ENGLISH: What about the man?
NP: Di man nko?
ENGLISH: What if I see the man?
NP: If aisi di man nko?
ENGLISH: Why is it that it is you that they sent?
NP: Wai I bi se na u dem sen?
ENGLISH: How are things?
NP: Hau nau?
ENGLISH: How are you?
NP: Hau bodi?

Conclusion
From the data collected , the researcher observed that special question in English language was discovered that normal sentence order of elements is upset in wh-question not only by the initial placing of the question of element but also by inversion of subject and operator in all cases except that in which the question element is subject. On the tag, the tag with the fallen tone will be noted and it invites confirmation of the statement and has the force of an exclamation rather than a genuine question. While in yes/No or general question, questions are usually formed by placing the operator before the subject and giving the sentence a rising intonation, if there no item in the verb phase.

Finally, Nigerian Pidgin is a pitch-accent language which also operates an intonation similar to English and in most cases movement of element was discovered but there is no significant difference in question formation in English and Nigerian Pidgin languages.

Recommendation
It is time for our government to give full recognition to Nigerian pidgin as a major Nigerian language to be used for national affairs as it is the case of present with the three major indigenous languages. To enhance the utility or value of it, government must take the lead and partner with linguists, educationist and other related bodies to immediately develop the orthography of the language and standardize its use in both formal and informal realms to protect the linguistic right of those it is their mother tongue. According to Dominic Kidzu, writing in the Sunday Triumph of February 5, 1989 quoted in Ayo Banjo (ed) '' Those who formulate our language policies should therefore investigate the possibilities available in the pidgin language with a view to entrenching it as our official lingua franca.(235).

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